

**Remarks by Ambassador Zumwalt
Self-Help Grant Signing Ceremony
U.S. Embassy, Dakar
Tuesday, September 8, 2015**

(As prepared)

Dear 2015 Self-Help Grant Recipients,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you here today to the Ambassador's Special Self Help Program annual award signing ceremony. I understand that most of you have traveled far to attend this ceremony. So I want to first thank you for being here today.

The Ambassador's Special Self-Help (SSH) program is a grass-roots assistance program that provides grants to support community development projects. The philosophy of this program is simple: To give communities the tools they need to help themselves. This is why we adopted the Wolof proverb "Ndimbal na ca fékhh loxol borom" meaning "Help yourself before seeking other's help."

Last week, I visited a community health center near Kaolack where the Self-Help program enabled the community to buy medical equipment and furniture. It was encouraging to see how members of this community had gotten together to develop and implement this project.

Today, we are celebrating our partnerships with community organizations from across Senegal to support a variety of projects aligned with community priorities. From Ziguinchor, Kolda and Kedougou to Saint-Louis, Lompoul and Dakar, these grants will help communities to purchase food processing equipment, renovate and improve schools and health centers, and develop new income-generating activities that will provide lasting benefits to these communities and generations to come.

For each of these projects, members of the community have taken the initiative to identify an important community priority. They then have worked together to develop a project and solicit outside assistance. In some cases, they noticed that women were walking for many kilometers to get to a mill or working long hours to manually grind millet and corn into flour. So they organized themselves to develop a grain processing project. Other communities identified a need for better education or healthcare facilities so they worked hard to come up with specific proposals to achieve these objectives.

I would like to commend all of the community leaders here today for the initiative and hard work that you contributed to developing each of these projects. We are proud to partner with you to help you to improve the welfare and prosperity of your communities.

Jereujef, Diarama, Albarka!